

SITE Intelligence Special Report:

# DISARRAY 2020:

## INSIDE THE FAR RIGHT'S APOCALYPTIC PREPPING FOR POST-ELECTION *"CIVIL WAR"*



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# A Message from SITE DIRECTOR, RITA KATZ

There is a disturbing consensus mounting across the far right. From white supremacists and Neo-Nazis to militia groups and the QAnon movement, many of America's most dangerous extremist entities collectively anticipate all-out civil war in the wake of the election.

They exclaim that civil war is "guaranteed" and "inevitable." They assure "November will be a time of reckoning" and devise ways to "make sure the world catches fire." They disseminate everything from agitational disinformation to implicit threats to send bombs in the mail. Many aspects of their predictions differ—who will instigate the violence, how it will happen, who will benefit—but their push to prepare for a calamitous 2020 election dominates all points of outreach and discussion.

Also feeding these threats and predictions are the increasingly tense racial justice demonstrations across the country and widespread economic suffering and health fears amid the coronavirus pandemic. As these conditions have negatively impacted Trump's polling numbers, his administration and campaign have amplified a baseless narrative of wide scale voter fraud aimed at preventing his reelection. The right has followed suit and, deprived of any material or ideological assurances of stability, increasingly embrace violent rhetoric.

To be clear: this frenzy among the online far right is highly unlikely to manifest the cinematic, decisive civil war for which they clamor. But it nonetheless sets the table for instances of voter intimidation and violent confrontation, not to mention yet more damage to public confidence in America's election process.

These forces preying on America's ever-vulnerable public must be held to account—as should those in power fanning these flames. Likewise, the social media companies hosting much of this chatter, propaganda, and coordination are given an immense level of responsibility in mitigating such activity.

I sincerely hope this threat is not lost on all such parties, because as the following report shows, these violent sentiments coming from the far right ahead of the Presidential election are not just abundant, but startlingly sincere.

*Rita Katz*

 @Rita\_Katz

# INTRODUCTION

The following report, composed by the SITE Intelligence Group, describes the widely prevailing themes of what the far right anticipates for the 2020 Presidential Election. These matters, which have dominated far right discussion and outreach ahead of November, are very often hinged on predictions of violence, chaos, or civil war. These sentiments are illustrated by various artifacts pulled from far-right venues online, including blog articles, social media posts, chat discussions, and promotional graphics.

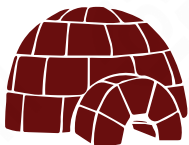
This report uses the term “far right” to describe an array of sub-movements that, while ideologically varying and often subject to infighting, show significant commonalities in their assessments and predictions for the 2020 elections. These sub-movements include (but are not limited to) the following:



- » **Neo-Nazis:** Followers of Orthodox National Socialism, as implemented by the Third Reich. Most Neo-Nazis’ focus on the 2020 US election does not hinge on practical politicking, but rather the desire to advance the collapse of American society.



- » **White nationalists:** Hyper-nationalist groups and individuals who seek a white ethno-state. White nationalists’ view of US elections and President Trump vary, though even the most critical among them often acknowledge him as an advancement of their agenda, even if only modestly.



- » **Militia groups:** An array of organizations within a larger right-wing movement. Many militia organizations formed against perceived government tyranny following the election of President Obama in 2008. However, during the Trump administration, many have since shifted their enmity toward perceived leftist “terrorists.” Newer militia entities like those of the “Boogaloo” movement utilize different aesthetics and jargon, but do embrace similar zeal for the Second Amendment, anti-government sentiment, and other elements.



- » **Hyper-nationalist groups:** Groups like the Proud Boys, which often ascribe to less rigid agendas and ideological tenants than other far-right movements, but nonetheless rely on the same reactionary narratives and themes.



- » **QAnon:** An increasingly popular pro-Trump movement driven by a conspiracy theory that the US government is run by a cabal of pedophiles and Satan-worshippers. The movement is based on information provided by “Q,” the alias of an individual(s) whom QAnon adherents believe to be a high-ranking government official providing insider information via cryptic Internet posts.

These and other far-right sub-movements are referred to specifically in this report when necessary.

# KEY POINTS

- » Amid political unrest across America, the far right perceives an existential threat from what they believe to be “Marxist” and “anarchist” movements driving the turmoil. The far right sees Donald Trump’s reelection as the only barrier to this perceived threat, and Biden as being aligned with or controlled by these supposed enemies.
- » Varying conspiracy theories have driven the far right to the firm belief that any Biden victory would be illegitimate, often giving way to anticipations of (and outright calls for) violence.
- » Far-right predictions of chaos and rigged elections are driven in no small part by President Trump and his high-profile allies, who often espouse strikingly similar conspiracy theories and warnings.
- » Various themes and narratives of the QAnon conspiracy theory movement have leaked into different corners of the far right, creating yet more cross-ideological bonds ahead of November.
- » Militia groups view President Trump as a de facto leader in their fight against “Marxist” rioters and demonstrators, marking a stark shift from their anti-government disposition espoused during the Obama presidency.
- » Also viewing President Trump as a de-facto leader are the Proud Boys, whom Trump directly signaled such a role to when he told them to “stand back and stand by” in a televised presidential debate.
- » President’s Trump’s calls for poll watching have been met with much enthusiasm by militia members, QAnon adherents, Proud Boys, and other far right entities, elevating risks of voter intimidation and potential violent confrontation.
- » Many accelerationist Neo-Nazis, while not supportive of Trump, find the President to be a useful agent for their agenda—bringing them to a similar embrace of Trump’s reelection as their white nationalist counterparts, even if for different motivations.
- » Social media companies like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok have increased their priorities on countering election-related threats from the far right, but a shared industry-wide initiative is needed to truly mitigate these dangers.



# Perception of Existential Threat from “Marxists”

Amid ongoing unrest in the US, there is a palpable sense among the American far-right that “the left” poses an existential threat. The far right commonly generalizes racial justice demonstrators and other activists as “Marxists,” “anarchists,” and “communists” that are collectively responsible for ongoing riots and unrest across America. A nearly universal consensus across the far right is that these leftist “terrorists” are set on the destruction of not only the country, but of “Western values”—a term into which the far right have instilled racist, genocidal implications.

This perception has elevated their assessments of the 2020 election stakes accordingly. The far right sees Biden as either powerless to stop these “Marxists,” or complicit in enabling them. Contributing to their distrust of Biden are the array of QAnon conspiracy theories of him being a “pedophile” along with other “deep state” elites. Such conspiracy theories have spread to other corners of the far right, with hashtags like #SaveTheChildren becoming a moral rallying cry which transcends inter-ideological frictions. A poster by The Proud Boys, a vehemently pro-Trump far-right organization, announced an event laden with similar innuendo about “Biden kid sniffers and Epstein pedophiles.”



[VIEW LARGER](#)

Trump, however, is seen as the only barrier to this perceived threat. Even white nationalists, despite not always viewing Trump as aligned with their pursuits of ethnostates, see his victory as more favorable than Biden’s; whereas Trump is the ineffectual in pursuing white nationalist goals, they believe, Biden is actively seeking to destroy them politically and/or physically. Until at least as late as August, The Daily Stormer, a prominent far-right news and commentary website run by well-known white nationalist Andrew Anglin, contained a header image warning:

***WARNING: IF DONALD TRUMP DOESN'T WIN THIS ELECTION, THE POLICE WILL BE ABOLISHED AND BLACKS WILL COME TO YOUR HOUSE AND KILL YOU AND YOUR FAMILY. THE MEDIA WILL NOT REPORT IT. IF YOUR FRIENDS POST ABOUT IT ON SOCIAL MEDIA, THEY WILL BE ARRESTED FOR HATE SPEECH. THIS ISN'T ABOUT POLITICS ANYMORE, IT IS ABOUT BASIC SURVIVAL.***



[VIEW LARGER](#)

Similarly hyperbolic assessments can be found in the militia movement. After the August 29 shooting and killing of a pro-Trump demonstrator in Portland by a self-professed antifascist activist, Stewart Rhodes, leader of the prominent Oath Keepers militia, exclaimed on Twitter, “The Democrat Party is now the party of Marxist revolution/insurrection/jihad seeking to destroy our constitutional republic.”

Rhodes’ statement speaks not just to the militia movement’s enmity toward Democrats and the American left, but also of their embrace of President Trump. Like other militia groups, Oath Keepers were formed in the aftermath of the Obama’s 2008 election and characterized their activism as being against government tyranny. However, in the Trump years, right-wing militia groups have reframed their struggle as being against “Marxists.”

# A De Facto Commander in Trump

As unrest across the country has unfolded, such groups and movements have escalated this support, essentially embracing President Trump as a de facto commander for their vigilante agendas.

"President Trump has both the power and the duty to call the militia into federal service to suppress this rebellion/insurrection," wrote Rhodes after the August 29 killing in Portland. "...And we will answer his call."

Similar embrace of Trump as a de facto leader can be seen in the Boogaloo movement, which has often taken similar ideological stands as many militia groups, but through the aesthetics and Internet-savvy language of younger generations. As an admin of a Boogaloo Facebook group with 183 members:

***Uh, why would we remove Donald Trump he's the most boogaloo friendly president of all time and the only one that will ever be elected. Boogaloo is a vet movement to combat the anarchists trying to destroy America.***

Hate groups like the Proud Boys, whose members often engage in brawl-filled confrontations with social justice protesters, have interpreted the same sense of command from President Trump. After the president announced he was pursuing terrorist designations against the Antifa movement

over the summer, a Proud Boys-affiliated Telegram channel wrote, "So... Theoretically if this passes... Are we a Counter-Terrorist organization?"

Thus, when President Trump told the Proud Boys to "stand back and stand by" in his first debate against Biden, he gave the most direct gesture of approval to this perceived role yet.

"Standing by sir," wrote Proud Boys chairman Enrique Tarrio on Parler, a free-speech alternative social media platform.

A post by a Proud Boys user on Telegram stated more brazenly, "Stand back and stand by for when the commies start a full escalation of war and he can call on us to essentially 'let loose the dogs of war'"

"Fuck it, let's go back to Portland," wrote another Proud Boy user on Portland, commenting on the Proud Boys' ongoing presence at violent protests in the city.

Others made Proud Boys logos updated to bear Trump's "stand back, stand by" statement. The group even put shirts up for sale on its website also bearing the phrase.





# Biden's "Coup" Plan and the Far-Right's Embrace of Poll Watching

The prospect of a "coup" on behalf of Joe Biden has been a recurring conspiracy theory among the far right. There are various versions of this theory involving different actors (e.g. "Marxist" rioters, the US Military, and "deep-state" operatives) and variables (e.g. "fraudulent" mail-in voting and delayed election results). However, among all corners of the far right, there is a universal sense that no Biden victory can be legitimate—or as Trump himself said, "honest"—and could only be the result of a coup.

The QAnon movement has expressed similar scenarios, echoing the warnings by "Q," whom QAnon adherents believe to be a high-clearance government official sharing insider information on "deep-state" conspiracies. For example, a September 16 post attributed to the Q alias describes current unrest and wildfires in Western US states as components of the coup:

## 1. Virus

## 2. Riots [organized \_ANTIFA]

## 3. Fires

**...Make no mistake, they will not concede on Election Night.**

**...Make no mistake, they will project doubt in the election results**

**Make no mistake, they will organize massive riots and attempt Anarchy-99 design**

**Playbook known.**

These beliefs can be seen in a September 10, 2020 video on the YouTube channel of "Amazing Polly," a QAnon adherent with nearly 400,000 subscribers. In the video, which was viewed over 322,000 times, she states, "We've got, I believe, the attempt at a deep-state coup—possibly military coup—happening right now in real time."

Amazing Polly's video was widely distributed across QAnon Telegram channels, propelled by her popularity within the movement.

These coup theories are often fed by dubious articles and sources. When not fabricating disinformation outright, the theories' proponents launder their worldview through innuendo-laden takes on legitimate news stories and research. This can be seen in responses to an [Axios interview](#) with a Democratic analyst who predicted that Trump may "appear to have won" before mail-in votes are counted. As the interview gained the attention of conspiracy theorists, an article on a popular white nationalist news website commented on it, claiming, "What these people are planning to do is claim that Biden won on vote by mail, and then form a massive violent mob in Washington, D.C."

White nationalists and Neo-Nazis have conveyed the same forecasts on Telegram, a central hub of far-right activity. "It's going down in November," [wrote one user](#) after sharing a conspiracy video about the Axios interview. "They're already preparing a coup if Biden loses. Using the military, media, George Soros etc"

"Not if we have anything to say about it," replied another user, who followed up shortly after, "I don't know about you but I'm gonna put on my gorilla suit and go bananas on any marxist who crosses my path."

Further feeding calls for confrontation are Trump's calls for poll watching by his supporters. Trump stated during his first debate with Biden, "I'm urging my supporters to go into the polls and watch very carefully because that's what has to happen. I am urging them to do it." The Trump campaign has even legitimized such activities as part of its "Army for Trump."



## A Coup in the Making

Amazing Polly • 322K views • 2 weeks ago

This might be the most important story out there right now. Deep State is openly planning how to subvert the election results and





These calls have found support from multiple far-right communities. Calls to poll watch as part of the Army for Trump were spread by prominent QAnon Telegram venues. In [one QAnon chat group](#) with over 5,000 members, a user shared the link to the Army for Trump website and wrote:

**SIGN UP HERE TO BECOME A POLL WORKER  
AND HELP KEEP AN EYE OUT AT THE POLLS\*  
WE CANNOT GET COMPLACENT! GO ON THE  
OFFENSIVE!**

## “Civil War Inevitable”

Anticipation of a “coup” or similar event following the election has made expectations of “civil war” in America a staple of far-right discussion ahead of November. Constituents of the far right anticipate civil war regardless of who wins the election, and likewise give different predictions as to who will spark this war based on whose victory they think will be more destabilizing. Many of these individuals express joy at the prospect of civil war and even encourage others work toward it.

The prospect of a civil war is something many in the far right welcome. In a popular white nationalist chat group on Telegram, one user wrote, “Milicias are preparing for war in the US...Everyone that is willing and able to do something about this next election is on edge.” Another replied, “I think the word you’re looking for is ‘excited.’”



The Proud Boys, who have garnered a reputation for escalating violence at public events, have likewise encouraged their members and supporters to volunteer as poll watchers. On October 5, user in a Proud Boys-affiliated Telegram group chat shared a post from the President’s official Telegram channel calling to “Volunteer to be a Trump Election Poll Watcher” In posting the link, the user wrote, “They don’t want us Republicans to be in their polls,” suggesting that Democrats are “bullying the ones that try.”

Such embrace of civil war reflects Neo-Nazis’ rejection of democracy—a point they have markedly inserted into their 2020 election-related outreach. An ongoing Neo-Nazi social media campaign dubbed “Voting Will Not Remove Them” has used instances of violence by American racial minorities to encourage violence over democratic processes. The campaign has spanned images, videos, and writing. Some content has promoted a reading list of various warfare-related literature such as Civil War Two, a book by white supremacist mercenary Thomas W. Chittum.

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Voting Will Not Remove Them

The reading list:

- War of the Flea, by Robert Taber
- Civil War 2, by Thomas Chittum
- 4th Generation Warfare Handbook, by William S. Lind
- On Guerilla Warfare, by Mao Tse Tung

The prospect of a civil war in America, as many in the far right believe, is something that has long been developing; the 2020 election would merely be the final catalyst. In a lengthy post made on August 21, a hyper-nationalist Telegram channel affiliated with the Proud Boys wrote that civil war is coming regardless of who wins the election:

***It doesn't matter if Trump or Biden wins, we are destined for another civil war. American society is headed for a collapse. Not because of Trump and not because of Biden. We are headed for a collapse because multiculturalism and diversity are not our strength. Democrats and GOP traitors have flooded our homelands with migrants who hate our way of life. Forcing all cultures to live in 1 place is a recipe for disaster. It was always destined to fail. The only way forward is to embrace the struggle and prepare to fight for your nation. Don't swallow the black pill. We will win.***

Fatal acts of violence at protests are viewed as validation of this perceived long-looming civil war. Among the most electrifying of these was the August 29 shooting and killing of a pro-Trump demonstrator in Portland by a self-professed antifascist activist. The day after the event, Stewart Rhodes, the leader of the Oath Keepers militia organization, tweeted a series of messages characterizing civil war as unavoidable by election night. They read in part:

***At this point, a civil war with the left can no longer be avoided...***

***...At this rate, we will be in open warfare against the Marxist insurrectionists by election night no matter what you do. You must do your duty now, by declaring this a nationwide insurrection, under the Insurrection Act, and nationalizing all National Guard Units to suppress it.***

***...Expect it to worsen exponentially by election night, with the left intent on using terrorism to suppress conservative voters from being able to vote in person. The result will be, at best, a contested election.***

Across other parts of the far right, predictions of civil war are fueled in no small part by the president's tone-setting refusal to assure a peaceful transition of power should he lose the election. Commenting on Trump's refusal, a prominent white nationalist channel wrote, "Social unrest and potential civil war is guaranteed at this point."

Another Neo-Nazi user wrote, "Civil war inevitable."

A popular Neo-Nazi Telegram channel similarly stated, "Can we stop and appreciate the fact that neither side will accept the outcome of this election?"

QAnon adherents have voiced similar anticipations—if not outward embrace—of civil war. As an October 4 post to a QAnon chat group declared, "[heavily armed](#)" Trump supporters will "show up" to the White House upon any perception of a stolen election:

***Do the DC criminals out to steal president Trump's reelection with fraudulent ballots realize how many heavily armed MAGA patriots with world-class military accessories will show up at the white house if anyone makes a move to illegally remove president Trump? It will be BIBLICAL.***

***Ex Military MAGA patriots will serve at the pleasure of the president as supplemental presidential law enforcement when called into action. CODE RED***

***MAGA patriots will explode on to the scene with unparalleled military leadership and weaponry.***

***Patriots with serious warfare skills will be prepared to legally protect president Trump at all costs and this post is not a joke.***



# Accelerationist “Reckoning”

Prospects of violence upon the 2020 election is welcomed by many Neo-Nazis, particularly those who ascribe to accelerationism, or the pursuit of bringing about society’s self-destruction. Within this frame of mind, any election-related source of chaos is seen as an asset, driving some to generate their own.

A September 8, 2020 post by “[Terrorwave](#),” a popular Neo-Nazi Telegram channel with over 3,000 subscribers as of late September, [described](#) social and political tumult ahead of the 2020 election as positive:

***The world is looking better than ever for we the Western Youth and I couldn’t be happier with the way things are going.***

***November will be a time of reckoning for many and we need to make sure of two things:***

- We make sure the world catches fire
- We don’t get burned

***Accelerationism isn’t a direct strike, it’s aggravating your common man until he strikes for you...***

This mindset of “aggravating” populations has made disinformation a popular method of attempting to disrupt the election. A [September 10 post](#) to an accelerationist Telegram channel shared a report on the announced withdraw of US troops from Iraq, adding, “Let’s sow chaos and spread rumors about these troops being deployed on American streets to disperse the ‘peaceful protests’ for the election.”

Despite Neo-Nazis’ prevalent disdain for democratic change, some among them see voting as a tool for acceleration. Voting for Trump in particular would further energize popular movements opposing his presidency, as one Neo-Nazi Telegram channel wrote on September 24:

***Trump must be elected a second time.***

***We need “the left” to completely lose faith in democracy and just go all out bonkers.***

***Vote Donald whore of the jews trump.***

***If Biden gets elected... Well first of all he’s a***

***demented pedophile, second of all, the riots are going to stop and third of all, they may shift their attention from fucking with Iran and China, to fucking with Russia, and that is bad both for white Russia, white eastern Europe, white Europe and white america.***

***I am encouraging you to vote for the whore of the juden untermensch, Donald blumpf.***

This view of Trump as a useful agent of acceleration is pervasive among Neo-Nazis, even while many of them consider him as a racial “traitor” and “a Mouth Piece of Jewish Zionism and Israel.” As one Neo-Nazi wrote on August 9:

***Not that I’m necessarily a Trumper...but Trump refusing to leave office regardless of the election outcome and declaring himself president indefinitely would objectively be the best thing for us.***

***Not because he’s some savior of the white race, rather because it would crank the chaos up to 100 and bait the left into starting a war with us that they have no hope in hell of winning.***

Another wrote in similar sentiment, “Im Voting for Trump. Best accelerationism ever.”

These forecasts of chaos cross over once more with the far right’s perception of a war against Black Lives Matter, Antifa, and other activist movements. As one user wrote in a Neo-Nazi Telegram chat group on August 18:

***If Trump wins again, we can expect the Antifa/BLM alliance to declare perpetual war in every major city. I think this type of accelerationism could be good for us in the long term... Things are gonna get very spicy in the near future, and the ensuing societal disorder will be present many opportunities for us to take advantage of.***



Other election-related rhetoric from accelerationists has threatened outright terrorist attacks. Seizing on worries regarding mail-in voting for the 2020 election, a meme disseminated by far-right users depicts “Unabomber” Ted Kaczynski holding a mail-in ballot and reads, “Yeah I’m mail voting.”

The image was reposted across like minded Neo-Nazi Telegram channels, some of which having thousands of followers.





# CONCLUSION

The far right's widespread anticipations of violence involving the 2020 Presidential Election mark profound new threats to American democracy. The seriousness of this threat is underscored not just in the predictions and incitements themselves, but also in the vast range of movements they are coming from: Neo-Nazis, white nationalists, militias, QAnon conspiracy theorists, and other far-right actors with otherwise different outlooks and agendas.

Once the magnitude of this threat is recognized, it becomes incumbent upon the US Government to assure voters that such far right initiatives to intimidate or spark violence are taken seriously. Likewise, the rhetoric of our elected officials will hold more weight in the next few weeks and months than it has for decades. Baseless accusations of voter fraud, failures to disavow far-right extremists, and use of violently charged rhetoric during this time should be seen not just as irresponsible, but as active damaging of the 2020 Election and a peaceful transition of power.

These threats from the far right also underscore the importance of social media companies to moderate the activity that takes place on their platforms. It appears companies like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok are indeed meeting the moment to varying extents, but such responsibility is shared across the tech sector—not just by well-recognized players.

As November approaches, the far right has collectively opted against stability. How America prepares against this will perhaps be one of the most defining factors of the country's trajectory for years to come.

